
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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Declaration of a State of Emergency for the Commonwealth of Virginia Due to a 5.8 Magnitude Earthquake and Aftershocks Affecting Localities throughout Virginia

Importance of the Issue

On August 23, 2011, I verbally declared a state of emergency to exist for the Commonwealth of Virginia based on a 5.8 magnitude earthquake occurring on August 23, 2011 and a series of aftershocks that affected localities throughout the Commonwealth.

The health and general welfare of the citizens require that state action be taken to help alleviate the conditions caused by this situation. The effects of this earthquake constitute a disaster wherein human life and public and private property are imperiled, as described in § 44-146.16 of the *Code of Virginia*.

Therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me by § 44-146.17 of the *Code of Virginia*, as Governor and as Director of Emergency Management, and by virtue of the authority vested in me by Article V, Section 7 of the Constitution of Virginia and by § 44-75.1 of the *Code of Virginia*, as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of the Commonwealth, and subject always to my continuing and ultimate authority and responsibility to act in such matters, I hereby confirm, ratify, and memorialize in writing my verbal orders issued on August 23, 2011, whereby I proclaimed that a state of emergency exists and directed that appropriate assistance be rendered by agencies of both state and local governments to alleviate any conditions resulting from significant events, and to implement recovery and mitigation operations and activities so as to return impacted areas to pre-event conditions in so far as possible.

In order to marshal all public resources and appropriate preparedness, response, and recovery measures to meet this threat and recover from its effects, and in accordance with my authority contained in § 44-146.17 of the *Code of Virginia*, I hereby order the following protective and restoration measures:

- A. Implementation by agencies of the state and local governments of the Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (COVEOP), as amended, along with other appropriate state agency plans.
- B. Activation of the Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC) and the Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT) to coordinate the provision of assistance to local governments. I am directing that the VEOC and VERT coordinate state actions in support of affected localities, other mission assignments to agencies designated in the COVEOP and to others that may be identified by the State Coordinator of Emergency Management, in consultation with the Secretary of Public Safety, which are needed to provide for the preservation of life, protection of property, and implementation of recovery activities.
- C. The authorization to assume control over the Commonwealth's state-operated telecommunications systems, as required by the State Coordinator of Emergency Management, in coordination with the Virginia Information Technology Agency, and with the consultation of the Secretary of Public Safety, making all systems assets available for use in providing adequate communications, intelligence and warning capabilities for the event, pursuant to § 44-146.18 of the *Code of Virginia*.
- D. The activation, implementation, and coordination of appropriate mutual aid agreements and compacts, including the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), and the authorization of the State Coordinator of Emergency Management to enter into any other supplemental agreements, pursuant to § 44-146.17(5) and § 44-146.28:1 of the *Code of Virginia*, to provide for the evacuation and reception of injured and other persons and the exchange of medical, fire, police, public utility, reconnaissance, welfare, transportation and communications personnel, and equipment and supplies. The State Coordinator of Emergency Management is hereby designated as Virginia's authorized representative within the meaning of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, § 44-146.28:1 of the *Code of Virginia*.
- E. The authorization of the Departments of State Police, Transportation, and Motor Vehicles to grant temporary overweight, over width, registration, or license exemptions to all carriers transporting essential emergency relief supplies or providing restoration of utilities (electricity, gas, phone, water, wastewater, and cable) in and through any area of the Commonwealth in order to support the disaster response and recovery, regardless of their point of origin or destination.

All over width loads, up to a maximum of 12 feet, must follow Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) hauling permit and safety guidelines.

In addition to described overweight/over width transportation privileges, carriers are also exempt from registration with the Department of Motor Vehicles. This includes vehicles in route and returning to their home base. The above-cited agencies shall communicate this information to all staff responsible for permit issuance and truck legalization enforcement.

Authorization of the State Coordinator of Emergency Management to grant limited exemption of hours worked for carriers when transporting passengers, property, equipment, food, fuel, construction materials, and other critical supplies to or from any portion of the Commonwealth for purpose of providing relief or assistance as a result of this disaster, pursuant to § 52-8.4 of the *Code of Virginia* and Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 390.23 and Section 395.3.

The foregoing overweight/over width transportation privileges as well as the regulatory exemption provided by § 52-8.4(A) of the *Code of Virginia*, and implemented in § 19 VAC 30-20-40(B) of the "Motor Carrier Safety Regulations," shall remain in effect for 30 days from the onset of the disaster or until emergency relief is no longer necessary, as determined by the Secretary of Public Safety in consultation with the Secretary of Transportation, whichever is earlier.

- F. The discontinuance of provisions authorized in paragraph E above may be implemented and disseminated by publication of administrative notice to all affected and interested parties by the authority I hereby delegate to the Secretary of Public Safety, after consultation with other affected Cabinet-level Secretaries.
- G. The authorization of a maximum of \$100,000 for matching funds for the Individuals and Household Program, authorized by The Stafford Act (when presidentially authorized), to be paid from state funds.
- H. The implementation by public agencies under my supervision and control of their emergency assignments as directed in the COVEOP without regard to normal procedures pertaining to performance of public work, entering into contracts, incurring of obligations or other logistical and support measures of the Emergency Services and Disaster Laws, as provided in § 44-146.28(b) of the *Code of Virginia*. Section 44-146.24 of the *Code of Virginia* also applies to the disaster activities of state agencies.
- I. Designation of members and personnel of volunteer, auxiliary, and reserve groups including search and rescue (SAR), Virginia Associations of Volunteer Rescue Squads, Civil Air Patrol, member organizations of the Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services, volunteer fire fighters, Citizen Corps Programs such as Medical Reserve Corps, Citizen Emergency Response Teams, and others identified and tasked by the State Coordinator of Emergency Management for specific disaster related mission assignments as representatives of the Commonwealth engaged in emergency services activities within the meaning of the immunity provisions of § 44-146.23(A) and (F) of the *Code of Virginia*, in the performance of their specific disaster-related mission assignments.

- J. The authorization of appropriate oversight boards, commissions, and agencies to ease building code restrictions and to permit emergency demolition, hazardous waste disposal, debris removal, emergency landfill siting, and operations and other activities necessary to address immediate health and safety needs without regard to time-consuming procedures or formalities and without regard to application or permit fees or royalties.
- K. The activation of the statutory provisions in § 59.1-525 et seq. of the *Code of Virginia* related to price gouging. Price gouging at any time is unacceptable. Price gouging is even more reprehensible after a natural disaster. I have directed all applicable executive branch agencies to take immediate action to address any verified reports of price gouging of necessary goods or services. I make the same request of the Office of the Attorney General and appropriate local officials.

Upon my approval, the costs incurred by state agencies and other agents in performing mission assignments through the VEOC of the Commonwealth as defined herein and in § 44-146.28 of the Code of Virginia shall be paid from state funds and/or federal funds. In addition, up to \$100,000 shall be made available for state response and recovery operations and incident documentation, with the Department of Planning and Budget overseeing the release of these funds.

Effective Date of this Executive Order

This Executive Order shall be effective retroactively to August 23, 2011, and shall remain in full force and effect until June 30, 2012, unless sooner amended or rescinded by further executive order.

Given under my hand and under the Seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia, this 31st day of August, 2011.

Robert F. McDonnell, Governor

Attest:

Secretary of the Commonwealth